

**House of Representatives  
Health Care  
Committee Meeting Schedule - Interim 2004**

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	COMMITTEE	SUBJECT	TYPE
September 20-21	TBA	Olympia	Full Committee	Evidence-based Medicine.  Update by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner on Premera conversion request.	Work Session/ Public Hearing
December 2-3	TBA	Olympia	Full Committee	Mental Health.	Work Session/ Public Hearing

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**Project Title: Evidence-based Medicine**

**Project Goal:**

To encourage the use of evidence-based medicine in the delivery of state-funded medical care.

**Project Description:**

The cost of state-funded health care has grown dramatically in the last several biennia. In an effort to help control costs, the 2003 Legislature passed ESHB 1299, "an act relating to evidence-based health services purchasing" that directed state medical directors to "develop and implement uniform policies across state purchased health care programs that will ensure prudent, cost-effective health services purchasing."

Staff will meet with the medical directors to determine their progress towards the directives in ESHB 1299, and explore other strategies which will encourage evidence-based procedures through state-funded health care programs.

**Number & Type of Meetings:** The Committee will hold a work session and possible public hearing during the September Legislative Assembly.

**Completion Date:** December 15, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** David Knutson/Amy Hanson/David Pringle

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**Project Title: Mental Health System Review**

**Project Goal:**

Develop a proposal to address policy, fiscal, and management issues related to the delivery of publicly financed mental health services.

**Project Description:**

The committee will review issues related to the use of Medicaid funds in the community mental health system, the need for additional community-based inpatient capacity, and the structure and functions of the regional support networks. The committee will also coordinate its efforts with the joint legislative and executive branch task force on mental health established under SHB 2459, section 715.

**Number & Type of Meetings:** The Committee will hold a work session and possible public hearing during the December Legislative Assembly.

**Completion Date:** December 15, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Dave Knutson

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## STAFF RESEARCH PROJECTS

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### **Project Title: Affordable Health Care Coverage for Small Employers**

#### **Project Goal:**

**Oversight of statutory changes related to the small group health insurance market.**

#### **Project Description:**

The committee will monitor the implementation of changes to the small group health insurance market enacted through the passage of SHB 2460. This will include the development of health plans offering a limited scope of health care benefits, changes in the size of the small group market, and modified rate adjustments for small group health plans.

#### **Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 15, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Dave Knutson

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### **Project Title: AIDS Omnibus Bill Rule Revision**

#### **Project Goal:**

**Monitor the Department of Health's current HIV policy review and any resulting regulatory changes or legislative requests.**

#### **Project Description:**

The AIDS Omnibus Act was passed by the Legislature in 1988 as a comprehensive public health approach for dealing with the spread of HIV/AIDS. For the past few years, the Department of Health, the Board of Health and the AIDSNET regions have been considering changes to the way that HIV/AIDS and other blood borne infections are addressed. The Department of Health has officially opened its HIV/AIDS regulations for public comment and proposed changes.

The committee will examine the concerns of the agencies and constituents involved in the HIV/AIDS policy review, monitor the Department of Health's revisions of its HIV/AIDS rules, and review any legislative proposals that may be considered.

#### **Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Chris Blake

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**Project Title: Health Care Delivery System Review**

**Project Goal:**

Develop a streamlined, coordinated, and simplified health care financing and delivery system for Washington State.

**Project Description:**

The committee will review proposals to increase the number of employees covered by employer-sponsored health care coverage. Options include offering limited scope benefit plans, employer-based fees to subsidize public-private partnerships, and waivers of federal Medicaid regulations.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Dave Knutson

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**Project Title: Dental Issues**

**Project Goal:**

Develop legislation that will increase access to oral health services.

**Project Description:**

Recent reports have highlighted the shortage of oral health care professionals in Washington State. Last year a legislative proposal was sent to the sunrise review process that would have made several significant changes to the regulation of oral health professionals.

The committee staff will meet with representatives of the various oral health professions and will report to the committee. The committee may prepare legislation to increase access to oral health care considering testimony and recommendations from the 2003 sunrise review report. In addition, the committee will monitor the Pierce County fluoridation case currently under consideration by the Washington State Supreme Court.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Chris Blake

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**Project Title: Health Care Disparities**

**Project Goal:**

Monitor the proceedings of the joint select committee on health disparities.

**Project Description:**

Recent reports from the Institute of Medicine and the Washington State Board of Health indicate that members of ethnic and racial minority populations have poorer health outcomes than Caucasians. In the 2004 session, the Legislature passed SCR 8419 which created a joint select committee to examine racial, ethnic, and gender-based health disparities.

The committee will monitor the proceedings of the joint select committee on health disparities and review its recommendations regarding reducing health disparities between people of different genders, races, and ethnic heritages. Issues to be addressed by the committee include the effect of early childhood development programs, cultural and linguistic barriers, and increasing diversity in the health care workforce.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** November 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Chris Blake

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**Project Title: Health Care Provider Rate Setting Process**

**Project Goal:**

Review the process used to set home care agency rates and recommend improvements.

**Project Description:**

The Legislature establishes rates for reimbursing vendors of long-term care services. Changes in the reimbursement of one category of vendors can impact the viability of other types of vendors.

The committee will review the way that rate-setting decisions are made with respect to home care agencies, including the various factors that must be considered in these decisions and the impact that changes to these rates have on other types of vendors.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Dave Knutson/Bernard Dean

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**Project Title: Health Professions Disciplinary Process Review**

**Project Goal:**

Evaluate the effectiveness of the current system of disciplining health care professionals with respect to removing unqualified practitioners and protecting their due process rights.

**Project Description:**

In 2003 there were several high profile instances of health care professionals engaging in misconduct or malpractice. In addition, the full impact of a recent Supreme Court decision that raises the standard of proof in certain disciplinary cases is not yet known, however, there is a pending case that may provide more clarification as to the extent of the state's authority to discipline health care providers.

The effectiveness of the division of responsibilities between the Secretary of Health and the health professions boards and commissions and the disciplinary procedures they follow was the subject of several bills before the Health Care Committee in the 2004 session. These bills include: HB 2326, HB 2834, and HB 2879.

The committee will monitor the Department of Health's review of internal procedures of the health professions disciplinary system and its findings. The committee will also explore the due process issues surrounding the disciplinary system and review the disciplinary schemes used by other states.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Chris Blake

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**Project Title: Long-term Care Financing Options**

**Project Goal:**

Explore options for individuals to finance their long-term care needs.

**Project Description:**

While federal law establishes general requirements for some areas of individual long-term care financing, there are other ways that states can encourage people to fund their long-term care needs. In addition, the way in which different states apply the federal laws can impact the long-term care decisions that individuals make.

The committee will review the use of Medicaid qualifying trusts and explore options for individuals to finance their long-term care needs through home equity conversion mortgages, tax-deferred savings, and other incentives.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Dave Knutson

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**Project Title: Medicaid Premiums and Co-Payments**

**Project Goal:**

Review the impact of premiums and co-pays on the number of children covered through the Medicaid program.

**Project Description:**

The committee will monitor the effect that Medicaid premiums and co-pays have on program participants. This will include determining whether caseloads decline based on increased participant cost sharing requirements.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Dave Knutson

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**Project Title: Prescription Drugs**

**Project Goal:**

Review the implementation of state prescription drug assistance programs within the context of federal prescription drug legislation.

**Project Description:**

The passage of federal legislation relating to prescription drug coverage under the Medicare program will impact state efforts to assist individuals' purchases of affordable prescription drugs. The committee will monitor the implementation of the preferred drug list, and other assistance offered to individuals in the context of the recently enacted Medicare prescription drug benefit.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Dave Knutson

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**Project Title: Sunrise and Mandated Benefit Reviews**

**Project Goal:**

Monitor the Department of Health's sunrise and mandated benefits review proceedings related to radiology assistants, and hearing aids and cochlear implants.

**Project Description:**

Upon request of the Legislature, the Department of Health conducts reviews of legislative proposals that require technical expertise in the health field. After the 2004 Session, sunrise reviews were requested for proposals related to vocational rehabilitation counselors and radiology assistants. Also, the Department was asked to conduct a mandated benefits review of a proposal to mandate insurance coverage of hearing aids and cochlear implants.

The committee will monitor the sunrise review process relating to radiology assistants (HB 2655), and hearing aids and cochlear implants (HB 2281 and HB 2890), and review the recommendations of the Department.

**Number & Type of Meetings:**

**Completion Date:** December 1, 2004

**Staff Assigned:** Chris Blake/Dave Knutson